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HOUSE RESOLUTION

2           WHEREAS, Prevent Child Abuse (PCA) Illinois, established  
3 in 1990, is dedicated exclusively to the prevention of child  
4 abuse and neglect; its programs contribute to strong, healthy  
5 families by: helping to prepare and support parents so that  
6 they can better care for their children; educating parents,  
7 grandparents, neighbors, babysitters, and others about  
8 situations that can be harmful to children; and raising concern  
9 among all citizens -- "we are all responsible for protecting  
10 our nation's children"; and

11           WHEREAS, PCA Illinois has 2 main advocacy priorities for  
12 Illinois in 2006; the first of these is to continue to build  
13 the Healthy Families Illinois Program across the State; Healthy  
14 Families Illinois (HFI) is a voluntary program of intensive  
15 home visiting to support parents of newborns and to reduce the  
16 risk of child abuse and neglect; it is modeled after Healthy  
17 Families America, a national initiative of Prevent Child Abuse  
18 America; its goals are to promote positive parenting, to  
19 encourage child health and development, and to prevent child  
20 abuse and neglect; and

21           WHEREAS, Begun in 1997 with State funding, HFI grew to an  
22 \$11 million statewide program in 51 different communities  
23 serving over 3,000 families annually by 2001; there has been no  
24 additional funding since 2001, and the program has not been  
25 able to grow toward serving the thousands more needing its  
26 services; PCA Illinois' vision is to see this program reach  
27 full scale in Illinois through incremental growth every year;  
28 and

29           WHEREAS, PCA Illinois' second advocacy priority for  
30 Illinois in 2006 is to address the methamphetamine problem in  
31 Illinois in partnership with the various State agencies and  
32 coalitions working on it; and

1           WHEREAS, Methamphetamine ("meth") has become the major  
2 drug problem in rural Illinois and has more serious  
3 implications for harm to children than any other drug; children  
4 are affected by its incapacitating effects on their parents and  
5 caretakers and by the risk of harm in its manufacture and  
6 sales; it is now specifically addressed in the Illinois  
7 Juvenile Court Act of 1986 within the definition of child  
8 abuse; and

9           WHEREAS, PCA Illinois has worked in partnership with State  
10 agencies and with community groups to help address this problem  
11 through public awareness, education, training, and support for  
12 legislative measures; several legislative responses have  
13 already been made; the Methamphetamine Control and Community  
14 Protection Act, which took effect January 11th, includes  
15 stronger deterrents to meth manufacture in homes where children  
16 reside or in multi-unit dwellings where other tenants,  
17 including families and children, would be put at risk; other  
18 recent legislation restricts access to products containing key  
19 meth ingredients ephedrine and pseudoephedrine; and

20           WHEREAS, PCA Illinois also supports keys issues raised by  
21 one of its child advocacy partners, Voices for Illinois  
22 Children, including: the Early Learning Illinois effort to  
23 improve and expand preschool opportunities for young children;  
24 the Children's Mental Health Partnership to strengthen  
25 children's mental, social, and emotional health; and the A+  
26 Illinois Campaign to reform school funding and improve the  
27 adequacy and fairness of education; and

28           WHEREAS, In 2006, PCA Illinois will work with the Illinois  
29 Association of Court Appointed Special Advocates to secure \$1  
30 million in funding to improve and expand the Court Appointed  
31 Special Advocate Program to serve more of our State's most  
32 vulnerable children; Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASAs)

1 are trained volunteers who serve as advocates for children in  
2 the court system interacting with the child and providing  
3 information in the child's best interest directly to the court;  
4 operating under careful guidelines established by National  
5 CASA for an intensive and ongoing commitment to the child,  
6 volunteers in Illinois served over 4,200 children last year;  
7 the actual need is more than six times that number; and

8 WHEREAS, A Child Abuse Prevention Month Media Conference  
9 Launch and Awards Ceremony is planned for April 3, 2006 in the  
10 State Capitol rotunda at Springfield; simultaneous launches  
11 will be held in Chicago and in southern Illinois; PCA Illinois,  
12 in collaboration with the Department of Children and Family  
13 Services, has planned a statewide calendar of events in  
14 connection with the prevention of child abuse and neglect for  
15 the month of April; therefore, be it

16 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE  
17 NINETY-FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that  
18 we proclaim April 2006 as Child Abuse Prevention Month in  
19 Illinois and urge organizations throughout the State to take  
20 steps to increase local and statewide visibility of Child Abuse  
21 Prevention Month activities.